

aren't okay with people buying and flirting their way into the United States. They demand safe and secure borders and honest and upstanding Border Patrol agents.

Make no doubt about it, most of our Border Patrol agents are honest hard-working men and women. But we must make an example of anyone who breaks the immigration laws, no matter which side of the border they live on. From time to time, we point out even on this House floor corruption of some Mexican Government officials that work along the southern border when they are helping drug smugglers and coyotes all in the name of filthy lucre, so we cannot tolerate a few border agents who, in the name of money, sell out America and insult the good name of most of our border agents.

So all of those who make money off of illegal entrants should be accountable, and it makes no difference, Mr. Speaker, who they are. The rule of law should be enforced. It is illegal to enter the United States without permission. That is the rule, and it should be enforced by honest border agents. And people that enter illegally should be held accountable.

It makes no difference who those people are, whether they are illegals that cross, whether they are narcoterrorists that bring money or drugs into the United States to sell, whether they are coyotes, or whether they are illicit businesses in the United States that exploit illegals that are working here, or whether they are corrupt border agents. All of these must be held accountable for the actions they commit, because the border is a national security issue.

And that's just the way it is.

STAGNATING MIDDLE-CLASS INCOMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, while the Republican Members of Congress have been blocking the first minimum-wage increase in 9 years, there is new evidence that income stagnation is not just hurting lower middle-class families but middle-class families across the board.

Just the other day, the Los Angeles Times reported that income stagnation is now hitting people with a 4-year college education. In fact, the White House's own economists report that earnings and income for employees with 4-year college degrees fell by 5.2 percent between 2000 and 2004, during the President's first term. That is when adjusted for inflation. So, basically, if you have a college degree education, you had a decline in income.

Now, for 30 years, 40 years we have told people that you earn what you learn. A college degree today is no longer as valuable a ticket to success as it was before. You have to literally

go back 30 years, to the 1970s stagflation, when people with a college education saw their income decline.

Now, what is happening in addition to income decline in America? This isn't just for working stiffs. This is for people with a 4-year college education and also for people with a master's education.

Energy prices? Well, they are up, more than doubled. In fact, when the President took office, gas was \$1.33 a gallon. Today, it has gone up to close to \$3 a gallon.

Health care costs. Health care costs for a family of four has risen 78 percent, to \$11,000 a year for a family of four.

College costs for their kids, up 38 percent for a 4-year college education.

Savings, for the first time since World War II, are in negative territory, which is why people say bankruptcy and debt is one of their biggest economic concerns besides filling up their car with gas.

So take that whole picture: incomes declining, energy prices up, close to doubling; health care costs \$11,000 a year for a family of four, and continuing at 25 percent increases; college costs up 38 percent; savings in negative territory. We have a Swiss cheese economy, and it is hurting and killing the middle class, who have done everything right. They got told to get a college education and you earn what you learn. Today that college education ain't enough. They went out and earned a master's degree in education. That ain't enough.

And on top of that, besides incomes going down, all the costs to maintain a middle-class life, health care, energy costs, education, and retirement security, are all under attack. And what do my colleagues do when it comes to retirement security, when corporation after corporation is eliminating pensions? They want Social Security to lead the way.

The plan for retirement security isn't, when companies are eliminating pensions, to have Social Security eliminated or privatized. It is to give them that security that people know, that people like, and that is the security that comes with Social Security.

On energy. What is their answer to rising costs? As my colleague from Oregon said before, they handed over \$14.5 billion in taxpayer subsidies to big oil companies so they could make additional profit. My view is if gas is 75 bucks a barrel, or 74 bucks a barrel, let the free market work. Use your profits to drill. Don't take taxpayers to subsidize it. People out there are paying twice, once at the pump at 3 bucks a gallon and once on April 15 when we hand over \$15 billion a year.

And for health care costs? They handed off to the pharmaceutical companies an additional \$130 billion in profits.

Middle-class families are struggling with ever-increasing taxes, ever-increasing costs and stagnant incomes. It

is time to have an economic strategy that, again, lifts all boats.

Now, I don't want to take a stroll down memory lane; but in the 1990s, when we were running balanced budgets and we were running a surplus, incomes for all people, not just the top end, but for all workers were up. College costs were contained, health care inflation was running alongside regular inflation, and energy prices were actually \$1.33 a gallon, not 3 bucks a gallon.

That was a time in which we actually made an improvement. We invested by giving all kids health care whose parents didn't have health care. We created 22 million jobs. We ended welfare as we know it. We put people to work rather than dependency. We had record homeownership, low inflation, a balanced budget, record surpluses, and began to pay down the debt.

Put your fiscal house in order. Invest in education, health care, and energy independence in America. It is time for a change. It is time for new priorities.

VENEZUELA AND TERRORISM

(Mr. ROYCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Subcommittee on International Terrorism that I chair held a hearing on Venezuela's link to terrorism. On May 15, the State Department designated Venezuela as not cooperating fully with U.S. anti-terrorism efforts. Mr. Speaker, from what we heard from the Department officials, it is not that Venezuela is not cooperating fully; it is that Venezuela is not cooperating at all.

Disconcerting was the testimony we heard from the State Department that Venezuelan passports can be forged with child-like ease, and that the U.S. is detaining at our borders an increasing number of third-country aliens carrying false Venezuelan documents. According to a 2003 U.S. News report, thousands of Venezuelan identity documents are being distributed to foreigners from Middle Eastern nations, including Syria, Pakistan, Egypt and Lebanon.

We know that travel documents are as important as weapons for terrorists. Mr. Speaker, post-9/11, it is reckless not to view our immigration policy as national security policy.

AMBASSADOR NOMINEE ROBERT HOAGLAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to express my concerns with the nomination of Robert Hoagland as U.S. Ambassador to Armenia. Many questions remain regarding U.S. policy on the Armenian genocide, and they remain unanswered. Key Senate Foreign Relations Committee